(b) whether farming in Punjab, which was very affluent State for that propose has now become highly risky, low return profession as also the cost of inputs i.e. diesel, fertilizer and labour cost have substantially increased and farmers are now in a bad shape as asserted by Vice-Chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University; and

(c) if so, what is Government's assessment; and steps taken to correct the situation ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) It is not correct that farmers in Punjab are in 'bad shape' because of low returns on agricultural crops. In fact, the Government is implementing Minimum Support Price Scheme (MSP) for 24 major agricultural commodities with the objective of ensuring payment of remunerative prices to the farmers. Under the Scheme, the Government announces MSP and organises purchase operations, through public and cooperative agencies such as Food Corporation of India, Jute Corporation of India, Cotton Corporation of India, etc. While fixing the MSP of commodities, the recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, the views of State Governments and Central Ministries, as well as other relevant factors are duly taken into account. As per information available for the years from 1994-95 to 1997-98, based on average price realised by the farmers, the profit margin, for wheat ranged between 11% to 31% over the total costs including fixed costs. The profit margin for paddy for these years ranged between 15% to 26%. The changes in input prices like diesel, fertilizer and labour costs, inflation rate, etc., are duly taken into account while fixing the Minimum Support Price. Through the MSPs, a guarantee is given to the producers that the prices will not be allowed to fall below the minimum economic levels. The farmers are, however, free to sell their produce in the open market at prices which maybe higher than the support prices. Fixed by the Government, in which case the profit margins would still be higher. For those agricultural commodities, which are not covered under MSP, the Market Intervention Scheme is applied whenever there is undue decline in prices. Facilities to farmers in adivasi districts of Maharashtra

4130. SHRI SURYABHAN PATIL VAHADANE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have provided facilities to the farmers in Maharashtra State, particularly in Adivasi districts to increase the production of agricultural items in that state;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not; the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) to (c) Government is implementing a number of Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes for the benefit of all categories of farmers in all states including in Adivasi Areas of Maharashtra. Some of the schemes particularly benefiting the Adivasi Areas in Maharashtra include:

(i) National Pulses Development Project,

(ii) Integrated Crop Development Programme—Coarse Cereals,

(iii) Bee Keeping, and

(iv) Assistance to Weaker Section Co-operatives.

In addition, the State Government is conducting training programmes on improved methods of cultivation of horticulture crops, plant protection measures, rearing of horticulture saplings and grafting techniques for various fruits crops in the various training centers established in tribal areas of the State.

Annual Production of fish in Maharashtra

4131. SHRI SATISHCHANDRA SITARAM PRADHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of annual production of fish during last three years and the current year in Maharashtra;

(b) the steps being taken to increase the fish production in the State;

(c) whether the present fish capacity is sufficient in the State; and

(d) if not, the steps being taken by Government to increase the fish storage capacity and marketing facility?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The Details of annual production offish during the year 1996-97 to 1998-1999 and upto December, 1999 in Mahrashtra are as follows:—

Annual Production of Fish	(In lakh Tonnes),
1996-97	5.90
1997-98	5.80
1998-99	5.20
1999-2000 (from April to Dec, 99)	3.81